

of rotation of the tire, the angle not passing through zero for the sipe lateral width of the sipe." (Emphasis added). Support for new claim 34 may be found throughout the original specification and drawings.

Applicants respectfully submit that JP314 does not disclose, teach or suggest such features. For example, over the span of a sipe lateral width, the sipe angle of inclination in JP314 does not stay between 2° and 15°. Over the span of a sipe lateral width, JP314 teaches that the sipe angle of inclination necessarily crosses through zero, as demonstrated by the "X" shaped sipe embodiments presented in JP314.

For at least this reason, as well as other reasons described above, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 34 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references, including JP314.

New Claim 36

Independent claim 36 recites, *inter alia*, " wherein the sipe angle of inclination is independent of a shape of the tread block or a shape of said laterally extending grooves." Support for new claim 36 may be found throughout the original specification and drawings. Specifically, please see support at page 5, lines 19-21.

During the January 27 personal interview, Examiner Maki referred to Japanese Patent JP 04100706 ("JP706") to support an assertion that the claims should recite "symmetrical" tread blocks. Applicant's respectfully assert that such a recitation is not required to overcome JP706.

For example, on page 34, paragraph 5-6, JP706 defines lines "L" and "M" relative to the shape of the block and the shape of the leading and trailing edges of the grooves forming the block. On page 34, paragraph 1 (last line), JP706 states that sipes within a tread block are formed parallel to one of line "L" and "M." In contrast, the present application at page 5,

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SUMMARY OK
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